Policy for agricultural extension

170. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRA1AH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are finalizing a policy framework for agricultural extension;

(b) if so, whether the extension policy is likely to be operational ised during the Tenth Five Year Plan through the Centrally-sponsored scheme of Extension Support to States;

(c) if so, by when this policy is likely to be made applicable; and

(d) to what extent k would be helpful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Proposed to be operationalised in the Xth Plan.

(d) The proposed policy framework for Agricultural Extension envisages revamping the extension service to make it a multi-agency system harnessing the strengths of public sector, private sector, media and information technology. Further it lays emphasis on group approach, farmer participatory methodologies, bottom up/strategic planning procedures making the system more demand driven and farmer accountable.

Procurement of cotton in Gujarat

171. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no notable purchase of cotton in Gujarat, even though the prices range below the support price;

(b) whether developed countries like America are paying subsidy to farmers upto 40 per cent of the cost;

(c) whether there are no buyers in Vidarbha area of Maharashtra and threre was a rasta roko andolan;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken to protect the interest of farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The prices of cotton in Gujarat have been ruling below the Minimum Support Price (MSP) during the current season and the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), a central nodal agency, has been continuously purchasing cotton from 29 procurement centres opened in the State of Gujarat and has procured a total quantity of 179011 bales of Cotton of 170kgs. each as on 18.2.2002. Further purchases are continuing.

(b) Information about amount of subsidy as percentage of cost, being paid by the developed countries like the United States of America, is not maintained.

(c) and (d) As regards "Rasta Roko Andolan" in Vidarbha area, farmers of the region had about 2 months ago, started agitation by blocking the road and rail transport demanding 100% payments against procurement of cotton under the Monopoly Purchase Scheme and insisted for opening of more procurement centres in Vidharbha and Marathawada regions.

(e) To protect the interest of cotton farmers the Government has (i) hiked import duty from 5% to 10% (effective from 9.1.2002) to restrain imports; (ii) fixed Minimum Support Price (MSP) for different varieties of cotton during each season and (iii) Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), a central nodal agency, is undertaking price support operation and has procured a total quantity of 6,42,048 bales (including MSO operations) in the major cotton producing States during the current season.

Bar on copra procurement by co-operative societies in Kerala

172. SHRI CO. POULOSE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some co-operative societies in Kerala were debarred from procurement of copra as they were charge-sheeted for involvement in corruption deals related to copra procurement;

(b) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the names of the societies;

(c) whether Government are aware that the State Government included these societies in the procurement area again; and